

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 12 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants appreciate that claims 3-11 and 15-16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but will be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, it is submitted that claims 1, 2 and 12-14 are allowable for the following reasons.

EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

Example embodiments of the present invention are directed to a tray transfer apparatus having a transfer plate 110, an array of detecting means 130, wiring means 143 and driving means 151, 161. The transfer plate 110 may include a plurality of tray holders 120 arranged and configured for the selective support and a release of a tray 21, wherein the tray may include an array of pockets 25 for receiving semiconductor devices SC. The detecting means 130 may be arranged and configured to detect the presence of more than two semiconductor devices in one of the pockets of a supported tray. A wiring means 143 may connect the detecting means 130 to an input/output terminal 145. The driving means 151, 161 may be arranged and configured to control vertical and horizontal movements of the transfer plate. By such configuration, the example embodiments of the present invention may improve tray transfer and detect faults in a manner that reduces product damage resulting in such faults (e.g., "double device faults").

CLAIM REJECTIONS-35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Nemoto et al. ("Nemoto"), US Patent Publication 2002/0036161. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants submit that Nemoto fails to disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, "an array of detecting means arranged and configured to detect the presence of more than two semiconductor devices in one of the pockets of a supported tray", as recited in claim 1.

By contrast, the detector sensor 500 of Nemoto merely detects whether there is a device in a pocket or not. Nemoto discloses that detecting the presence of an IC on the test tray

depends on whether the detecting sensor detects lights passing through the aperture 16A or not (see paragraph [0080]). Thus, the detecting sensor 500 of Nemoto cannot distinguish between a case where one IC is present on the test tray from a case where more than two ICs are present on the test tray (see FIGS. 12 and 13).

Further, Applicants submit that Nemoto fails to disclose or suggest, “wiring means connecting the detecting means to an input/output terminal”, as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner alleged that loader section 300 corresponds to an input/output terminal.¹ However, it is submitted that loader section 300 is merely a section for loading test trays TST (see Fig. 4); and not an input/output terminal. Further, Applicants have read the entire patent of Nemoto, and cannot determine where or how “wiring means connecting the detecting means to an input/output terminal” is found. Thus, Nemoto is completely silent with regard the above feature.

With regard to claim 12, Applicants submit that claim 12 is allowable for the similar reasons discussed above with regard to claim 1. Specifically, claim 12 also recites “an array of detecting switches arranged and configured to indicate the presence of more than two semiconductor devices in a pocket of the supported tray”.

In addition, Nemoto fails to disclose “a detecting substrate”. Applicants again submit that Nemoto is completely silent with regard to the feature of “a detecting substrate”. As an example embodiment, the detecting substrate 140 as recited in claim 12 may be provided on and attached to an upper portion of a transfer plate 110, and have detecting switches 130 mounted thereon in a configuration corresponding to installation holes.

Because Nemoto fails to disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention, it cannot provide a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Claims 2 and 13-14 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on either independent claims 1 or 12. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant earnestly solicits reconsideration and allowance of all of the pending claims.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the telephone number of the undersigned below.

¹ See Office Action, page 2, paragraph 2.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
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